

## THE STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN FACING TEST ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN READING COMPREHENSION TEST

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### Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kesulitan siswa dalam menghadapi Tes Kemahiran Bahasa Inggris pada bagian Pemahaman Membaca. metode penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. dan uraian data melalui soal-soal seperti yang telah dijelaskan pada bagian sebelumnya bahwa siswa mempunyai beberapa faktor atau kesulitan dalam Tes Kemahiran Bahasa Inggris atau TOEFL. berikut beberapa kesulitan siswa dalam menghadapi Tes Kemahiran Bahasa Inggris pada bagian pemahaman membaca, antara lain: 1). Kesulitan karena kurangnya kosa kata, 2). kesulitan dalam memahami arti kata, 3). kesulitan dalam bahasa Inggris atau struktur tata bahasa. dan ada beberapa faktor yang paling menyebabkan kesulitan pemahaman membaca siswa, seperti: 1). Kurangnya minat membaca siswa, 2). kurangnya motivasi siswa dalam membaca teks bahasa Inggris, 3). kurangnya konsentrasi siswa dalam mengikuti tes kemampuan bahasa Inggris, 4). Teks bahasa Inggris yang panjang, 5). Kurangnya kosa kata yang familiar. Fakta tersebut juga didukung oleh hasil wawancara yang menunjukkan bahwa hal-hal ini harus dipertimbangkan untuk diselesaikan.

**Kata Kunci:** Pemahaman Membaca, Kesulitan Siswa, Tes Kemahiran Bahasa Inggris (TOEFL).

### Abstract:

*This research aims to determine students' difficulties in facing the English Language Proficiency Test in the Reading Comprehension section. This research method uses a qualitative method. And description of data through questions as explained in the previous section that students have several factors or difficulties in the English Language Proficiency Test or TOEFL. Here are some of the students' difficulties in facing the English Proficiency Test in the reading comprehension section, including: 1). Difficulties in lack of vocabulary, 2). Difficulties in understanding the meaning of words, 3). difficulties in English or grammatical structure. and there are some factors that cause the most difficulties for students' reading comprehension, such as: 1). Lack of student interest in reading, 2). Lack of student motivation in reading English texts, 3). lack of student concentration in taking the English proficiency test, 4). Long English texts, 5). Lack of familiar vocabulary. These facts are also supported by interview results which show that these matters must be considered for resolution.*

**Keywords:** *Reading Comprehension, Student Difficulties, English Proficiency Test (TOEFL).*

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## INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the most important language skills for students to learn. Students can improve their language skills and gain experience by reading. Reading is used for language acquisition, communication, and the exchange of information and ideas. The reader will learn important information and ideas. Furthermore, they will be able to learn what they did not previously know.

Preliminary research people will understand the purpose of communication and comprehend the meaning of others in written tests if they read. Reading is a skill that necessitates an interactive process in order to obtain information or ideas from written text. Understanding the meaning of the reading skill, including the ability to read from many experts with different points of view, is crucial for the reading teacher. One of the four language skills is reading. It is the students' first direct communication in order for them to develop their language skills.

Teaching reading comprehension is the process of assisting, facilitating, and guiding students in comprehending the text and providing numerous opportunities for practice. Because of the crucial necessity of reading instruction, it has been the topic of decades of research and practice, encompassing different teaching approaches and even some dispute. The reading wars are a long-running debate among educators and researchers on the optimal technique of teaching reading.

There are several components of English language in the TOEFL test. Listening, Reading, Structure, and Writing are the four skills. There are several problems that can be difficult for students to solve,

particularly in the TOEFL reading section. One of the issues that students encounter is difficulty reading. There are several reasons why students today have such a low interest in reading. Several of them, for example, the emergence of boredom when students read a very long text due to a lack of reading interest. The students' lack of vocabulary is also a problem, particularly when translating English words into language; the students frequently stop reading because when they translate the words, they do not know the test. The next issue is that when students read, they always think that reading takes too much time, which is one of the problems in the TOEFL reading section.

## RESEARCH METHOD

In this method researcher used qualitative research in order to make it easier for researchers to complete their research in obtaining the data information needed and this research focuses on describing phenomena.

Researchers use surveys to answer some of the questions from the problems above, using observation and investigation make it easier for researchers to find answers to the research above. Using interviews, the researcher can find out the factors of students' difficulties in facing Test English Proficiency in Reading Comprehension. Therefore, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive method.

### A. Data Collection Technique

Data collection techniques are the most important part of this study. From this data collection researcher will find out about the problems that are often experienced by students in Test English Language Proficiency. In this study, researcher used

descriptive qualitative research using several types of data collection methods ranging from observation, interviews, and documentation.

### **1. Observation**

Observation is one of the techniques used to collect the data. The researcher can find the answers by focusing on and taking participants in an event or activity. Observation is a scientific activity that is empirical, factual, and focused on the actual text. Observations made using the experience gained from sensing without any manipulation (Hasanah, 2017). In his book explains that scientists can conduct research because there is data, namely facts about the reality that occurs obtained from observations. In this research, researcher conducted observations to find out how students can do be better ways in the classroom when facing Test English Language Proficiency in Reading Comprehension section, students' lack of interest in reading, students not have much of vocabulary, students are difficulties in understanding the meaning of words and students are difficulties in English language structure or grammar. The observations made were non-participant observations held on 13 May 2024 at STKIP PGRI Bangkalan sixth semester.

### **2. Interview**

This technique is used to complete and support the primary data of the research. Interviews provide the most direct and straight forward approach to gathering detailed and rich data about a particular phenomenon. The type of interviews used for data collection can be tailored to the research question, and

participant characteristics and the investigator has a preferred approach (Dursun, 2023). In this research, the instrument used was the interview. In this activity the researcher and the informant meet directly and conduct an interview. Before the interview activity takes place, the researcher makes a list of questions in advance so that when the interview the topic of discussion does not deviate and the information sought or needed by the researcher can be fulfilled. Researcher interviewed four students of sixth semester, students conducted behind the STKIP PGRI Bangkalan campus on 13 May 2024.

### **3. Documentation**

A documentation tool was developed for research with an analytical approach. In addition, it is used in research to find historical evidence, legal basis, and applicable regulations. The objects of study include not only books, journals, documents, regulations, conference reports, and diaries, but also historical objects such as inscriptions and relics (Gurung, 2022). Researchers documented in the form of field notes, and also pictures or photographs used as a complement to interview and observation data.

## **B. Data Analysis Techniques**

### **1. Data Reduction**

Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transferring, the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions. The decided which to pull out, with pattern best summarizing. The data reduction is an analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards, and organization

such a way conclusion could be drawn and verified. It means the researcher made data more specific to easy in drawing some of the data based on the data collection.

## 2. Data Display

Data displays are designed to assemble organized information into an immediately accessible, compact form so that they can see what is happening and either draw justifiable conclusion. It means the researcher was led complex data into a simple or selective form, so it will be easy to understand.

## 3. Conclusion

The last step, the researcher analyzed and made conclusion from the data finding about the analysis of students' difficulties in facing Test English Language Proficiency in reading comprehension test in sixth semester students' English Education Department of STKIP PGRI Bangkalan.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### A. RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this part, the researcher provided the data that have been collected from observation, interview and documentation during the research at new students. The researcher explains in the following:

#### 1. Students Difficulties in Reading Comprehension in Facing Test English Proficiency

There are several types of difficulties in reading English texts that are usually faced by students in the learning process including: (1) Difficulty in lack of vocabulary, (2) Difficulty in understanding

the meaning of words, (3) Difficulty in English or grammatical structure.

#### • Difficulties in lack of vocabulary

Students' lack of vocabulary is students' vocabularies has limited to understand the text. It is showed in the following students' statement

*"I'm lazy to remember the new vocabulary and I haven't had much vocabulary".*

Students must master or have a lot of vocabulary in order to be able to work on questions with English text and get a high score. According to Lisiana, (2021), Students who lack vocabulary knowledge struggle to interpret the main idea in a reading text word by word or sentence by sentence.

#### • Difficulty in understanding the meaning of words

Students' did not understanding to translate of sentences, because the students' has weak from translate the text when their did the test, and students' still interpret word by word not sentences. The students' statement

*"I don't understand the meaning of the words in each sentence, and I prefer to interpret using a Google Translate."*

By knowing the meaning of a word in each sentence, they can understand the meaning of the sentence and can take the English proficiency test without asking for help from the Google Translate application so they don't find it difficult to do it. According to Lisiana, (2021), the reader's understanding is very dependent on mastering the meaning of the text. Students with good cognitive and memory have the ability to understand the meaning of the

text they have read because they can remember more information obtained from reading comprehension.

- **Difficulty in English language structure or grammar**

Students' language structure is not enough well-mastery include the use of clauses. The follow students' statement

*"I am not fluent in English, so I find it difficult to organize and interpret words in a sentence."*

They feel that they don't understand foreign languages and are still minimal in English, especially when taking the English proficiency test, where there is section 2, namely grammar questions, where you have to know the proper and correct structure of the language in order to be able to do the questions well and correctly. According to Friska, (2022), students with good cognitive abilities and memory have the ability to understand the meaning of the text and the structure of the text they have read because they can remember more information obtained from understanding the reading text and knowing the order of the word arrangement in the text.

## 2. Some Factors have The Most Causing Difficulties For Students' in Reading Comprehension

- **Lack of student interest in reading**

Students' are not interested in reading due to their daily habits of being lazy in reading articles and other reading media, as well as the surrounding environment which is not supportive, namely very low interest in reading. The students' statement

*"I'm lazy and not interested in reading, I prefer to read short dialogue."*

With limited student interest in reading skills, students will experience developmental delays in reading English texts as well as students' lack of instinct to reason in learning a science or not have more insight. According to Lisiana, (2021), students' have difficulty mastering the skill of reading English texts, this is because most students are lazy about reading texts, articles or news, they are more interested in chatting via social media in short and concise language.

- **Lack of student motivation in reading English texts**

Students' motivation in learning to read is very low due to students' lack of concentration, a less conducive environment and a high level of laziness in learning. The students' statement are followed

*"I am not moved/not motivated to read English texts, because I cannot understand the meaning of the sentences."*

Here the teacher must play an important role in students who lack motivation in learning, especially in learning to read English texts so that students can generate a feeling of learning and working on English texts. According to Lisiana, (2021), teachers must be aware and truly understand that reading comprehension is a complex skill that involves factors such as students' learning motivation.

- **Lack of student concentration in taking the English proficiency test**

The lack of concentration of students' in taking the test, that is students' are not interested in the subject, is also caused by the students' unhealthy condition. Statement of the students'

*"I didn't concentrate when taking the English proficiency test because I felt bored and dizzy when I saw English text."*

Here students need full concentration in reading English texts so they can grasp the contents of a reading text and can answer the questions on the English proficiency test in the reading section. According to Dahlan, (2021), students' may think that difficulty concentrating is a normal problem because they are bored with the lessons or questions they are working on. In fact, difficulty concentrating can affect student productivity.

- **Long English texts**

A long text in English Test Proficiency made students' confused to understanding the content of the text when taking the test. The statement of students' are followed

*"One of the factors of my difficulty in reading comprehension is that I don't like long texts so I can't understand the contents of the text, besides that I often use the Google Translate application so I'm lazy to learn to understand text and add new vocabulary".*

Students must train themselves to read long English texts by reading articles on social media, so that they are used to understanding the meaning of words and synonyms in the English proficiency test questions. and are not used to using translation applications to make it easier to

do English questions, especially in the English proficiency test. According to Lisiana, (2021), The length of the text discourages students from reading. This research found that the length of the text can make it difficult to identify the main idea.

- **Lack of familiar vocabulary**

Unfamiliar vocabulary is annoying students' did not understanding the meaning of the text and their did not know the synonyms. Including questions in Test English Proficiency. The statement of students'

*"My lack of vocabulary results in difficulty understanding the meaning of a question text so that I don't know the meaning of the sentence and have difficulty finding synonyms."*

It is important to know that we as linguists must always add new vocabulary to ourselves, either through our daily conversations or learning on other social media, there are even many vocabulary applications now so that students' problems can be solved by learning to read language texts English and can interpret word by word or even paragraph by word and can take the essence of a reading text. According to Lisiana, (2021), students' struggle to understand a text when they don't understand the meaning of words or sentences

## **B. DISCUSSION**

This section on answering one research question as mentioned previously in the first chapter:

## **1. Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension in Facing Test English Proficiency**

This research was conducted to find out what are the students' difficulties in facing Test English Proficiency in reading comprehension. The researcher that had been done by the researcher the showed that they found difficulties experienced by students' when taking the English proficiency test in the reading comprehension section. Each student has different difficulties, because they have different abilities.

Furthermore, from the results of interviews with the participants the researcher indicated that find for the first, students' difficulties in reading comprehension in facing Test English Proficiency there are three sections, including: 1). Difficulties in lack of vocabulary, 2). Difficulties in understanding the meaning of words, 3). Difficulties in English or grammatical structure.

## **2. Some Factors have The Most Causing Difficulties For Students' in Reading Comprehension**

According to previous researches, previous study is a journal article done by Dahlan, (2021), showed that due to their laziness, students read about their best tool on grand. The vocabulary used in the reading portion of the TOEFL is rarely used, so students can only guess their answers, which causes them to struggle with the questions. The similarity in this research is analyzing the difficulties of students in taking the TOEFL test who have minimal vocabulary, and are lazy to read, which makes students answer the

questions with random answers. In contrast to earlier findings due to their laziness, students read about their best tool on grand. The vocabulary used in the reading portion of the TOEFL is rarely used, so students can only guess their answers, which causes them to struggle with the questions. Our research include that students have difficulty in taking the English proficiency test, namely because of their minimal vocabulary, as well as the difficulty in understanding the meaning of words, so students often use Google Translate to interpret a word or sentence when doing an assignment English Language, including an English proficiency test, and students are lazy to read texts that are too long and don't understand language or grammatical structures, so students answer easier questions first and most students rely on the ability to guess without regard to reading the text well, so they rely on random answers that match what they think.

The result of the research is that students have difficulty in taking the English proficiency test, namely because of their minimal vocabulary, as well as the difficulty in understanding the meaning of words, so students often use Google Translate to interpret a word or sentence when doing an assignment speaking English, including an English proficiency test, and students are lazy to read texts that are too long and don't understand language or grammatical structures, so students answer easier questions first and most students rely on the ability to guess without regard to reading the text well, so they rely on random answers that match what they think.



## **CONCLUSION**

Students' difficulties in understanding the English Proficiency Test in reading comprehension are:

Difficulty in understanding the TOEFL reading test

On vocabulary items, sixth semester students are very minimal in vocabulary because they are lazy to remember it and the vocabulary is still rarely used every day, they lack understanding of the meaning of reading texts, where students still have difficulty understanding the meaning of English texts and they still have difficulty understanding the meaning of English texts interpreting word by word so that the meaning of the sentence in the question is inappropriate or messy, and they use the Google Translate application as the fastest solution in taking the English Proficiency Test. And students have difficulty in language structure or grammar, they have difficulty constructing sentences properly and correctly. so that students only rely on random answers which they think are correct, this makes the answers incorrect, so that the scores obtained by these students are low or do not match the general score limits usually on the English Proficiency Test.

Several factors for students having difficulty reading comprehension in the Test English Proficiency

There is some factor in difficulty reading comprehension in Test English Proficiency, namely: According to researchers, there are 5 factors of difficulty faced by students in the English Proficiency Test reading test, namely: 1). Lack of students' interest in reading, 2). Lack of students' motivation in reading, 3). lack of students' concentration in taking English Proficiency Test, 4). Long English text, and 5). Lack of familiar vocabulary. Therefore,

when working on or answering English Proficiency Test questions in the reading section, you must use your time as efficiently as possible, especially students must have time to read English articles on social media and students must motivate themselves to continue learning to read English text. And reading that is too long makes students bored of reading, besides that students are required to increase their vocabulary before taking the English Vocabulary Proficiency Test before reading. because when reading there is a lot of vocabulary that is unfamiliar and difficult to understand and students are advised to concentrate fully in taking the English Proficiency Test.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Praise to Allah SWT, the most gracious and the most merciful, who has given his blessing and enhance for completing this thesis entitled "The Students' Difficulties in Facing English Language Proficiency in Reading Comprehension Test". This thesis is written as one of requirements of Undergraduate Degree the English Education Department of STKIP PGRI Bangkalan. In finishing this thesis, the researcher obtained so many helps, supports, loves, and many valuable things from various sides.

Thanks and sincerity to my beloved parents, Bopo Ady Ibrahim and Mamak Maryamah Narry, my beloved sisters Nailatul Futuhah, Diantun Nabila, Achmad Armansyah Ibrahim, and Rizqi Aulia, as well as the person who accompanied me on my path all this time, namely Mr. Mochammad Mustaqim who always prays and supports and spends a lot of time and money to support researchers all the time, and always reminds researchers to complete this thesis as soon as

possible. Therefore, the researcher would sincerely thank to :

1. Fajar Hidayatullah, M.Pd as the head of STKIP PGRI Bangkalan.
2. Tera Athena, M.Pd as the chairman of English Education Department.
3. Moh. Hafidz, M.Pd as my supervisor who has guided, supported, directed, provided suggestions, and recommendations in writing this thesis from start to finish.
4. Dr. Siti Maria Ulfa, M.Pd as my examiner who has guided, supported, encouraged, provided critical comments in writing and completing this thesis.
5. All of lectures of English Education Department.
6. My parents who have been the most instrumental in my life, Bopo Ibrahim and Mama Maryamah. Thank you for the trust that has been given to me to continue my education at university, as well as the endless prayers, love, motivation, enthusiasm and advice given to the author in preparing this thesis.
7. For the love of my younger siblings, namely: Nailatul Futuhah, Dianatun Nabila, Achmad Armansyah Ibrahim, Rizqi Aulia, and not forgetting the person who plays a very important role in my life, namely: H.M. Syarief Nawawie, S.Ag. Thank you for all the prayers and support that have been given to me in the process of writing this thesis.
8. That have been given to me in the process of writing this thesis. To someone whose presence is no less important, Mr. Mochammad Mustaqim. Thank you for being part of the author's life journey. Contributed a lot in writing this thesis, both material and time to the author. Has supported, entertained, listened to complaints, and given encouragement to never give up.
9. Fellow students, especially from the English language education department STKIP PGRI Bangkalan for their support and cooperation during their studies and completing the preparation of this thesis.
10. To my self, the greatest appreciation for being responsible for completing what has been started. Thank you for continuing to try and never give up, and enjoying every process which is not easy. The author is aware that this thesis still has many shortcomings, because perfection only belongs to God, but the author hopes that this thesis can be useful especially for the author and readers and other researchers. Therefore, the author accepts several suggestions for improvement.

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